

This record is a partial extract of the original cable. The full text of the original cable is not available.

UNCLAS GUATEMALA 001806

SIPDIS

DEPARTMENT FOR DRL A/S CRANER AND DWALTERS

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [PHUM](#) [PREL](#) [EAID](#) [KJUS](#) [GT](#)

SUBJECT: SUPPORT REQUEST FOR HUMAN RIGHTS PROSECUTOR

REF: 02 GUATEMALA 3269

1. This is an action request for DRL. See para 8.

2. Summary: Attorney General Carlos De Leon has requested USG support for the Public Ministry's Office of the Special Prosecutor for Crimes Against Human Rights Workers. De Leon cited the Public Ministry's resource constraints and the critical role the Special Prosecutor's office is playing in defense of human rights workers. Thelma Pelaez De Lam, the new Special Prosecutor, has also expressed concern that she does not have adequate funding to achieve her mission of bringing to justice those who threaten the lives of human rights workers. We consider De Lam an energetic new GOG ally in the fight against impunity and believe providing USG support to her office could significantly improve the climate of human rights in Guatemala. End Summary.

3. At a meeting with the Ambassador on June 27, Attorney General Carlos De Leon requested USG support for the work of newly named "Special Prosecutor For Crimes Against Human Rights Groups, Indigenous Groups, Civil Society and NGOs," Thelma Pelaez Pineda De Lam. De Leon noted that De Lam's energy and courage had already led to successful investigations and the arrest of suspects in the case of murdered human rights activist, Manuel Garcia de La Cruz (Reftel), and that her investigations into the murders of three other human rights workers unveiled suspicions of police involvement in the crimes. De Leon said that De Lam is exposed, and his office doesn't even have funds to adequately meet the equipment needs she has to carry out the job. He asked that the USG give consideration to providing equipment support to her office.

4. In meetings with HROff on June 10 and 23, De Lam said she had initially operated with a staff of only three until early June when her staff jumped to 24. However, De Lam had yet to receive a paycheck and her staff had not been reimbursed for investigation expenses. She lacks computers, adequate transportation, and support from auxiliary prosecutors. By virtue of her sensitive position, De Lam's security is in jeopardy and she is regularly escorted by a three-person security detail.

5. De Lam gave HROff a list of items that would aid her office in successfully prosecuting human rights violators. The list included: four 4x4 vehicles in order for her to carry out investigations simultaneously in rural areas; three laptop computers and a printer to document and report information while on the road and before rural tribunals; ten desktop computers with printers for the office; and various courses in investigations, ballistics, criminology, pathology, crime scenes, interrogation, and others for her team.

6. NAS has agreed to include De Lam's investigators in training program as appropriate and USAID is also seeking funding to support De Lam's office.

7. Lack of resources impedes this key GOG office from conducting thorough investigations, handling evidence, and successfully prosecuting human rights violators. Nevertheless, De Lam has indeed been making credible progress in important investigations. Increased funding and resources would enable the Special Prosecutor to investigate and prosecute more cases and thereby advance our human rights agenda here by bringing to justice those who threaten or take the lives of human rights defenders.

8. ACTION REQUEST: Embassy requests special Department funding to provide material support requested by De Lam in para 5. We estimate that at relatively low cost to the USG, we can help the GOG achieve disproportionate results. We estimate that providing all the material requested would cost \$200,000. However, lower levels of support would also substantially add to the Special Prosecutor's investigative and prosecutorial productivity.

9. For example, with a USG grant of \$85,000, De Lam could purchase 2 vehicles (\$35,000 ea.), 3 laptops (\$2000 ea.), 7 desktop computers (\$1000 ea.), 4 printers (\$300 ea.), and \$800 worth of training materials and classes. This level of support would permit De Lam and her team to conduct simultaneous investigations (versus the current serial

efforts she is making) in rural areas where 90% of crimes  
again human rights workers take place.

10. A lesser grant of \$45,000 would purchase one vehicle, 2  
laptops, 5 desktops, 3 printers, and leftover funds for  
classes and training materials.

HAMILTON